

San Diego DX Club Bulletin

April 2018



**VK5MAV/9
Cato Reef, OC-265**

APRIL PROGRAM

WSJT-X Digital Mode: Hints and Kinks
By: NA6L

MEETING NOTICE:

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 25, 2018

**JOIN US AT THE SIZZLER, 3755 Murphy Canyon Road,
San Diego, CA 92123 (858) 278-6988
SOCIAL HOUR, 5:00 P.M. DINNER, 5:30 P.M.
MEETING, 6:30 P.M.**

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From the Prez . . .

Mike, NA6MB



Just back from the IDXC (International DX Convention) 2018 edition.

As usual, a fine effort was presented by the SCDXC with help from our SDDXC members.

I was a bit worried at first, since the registration desk sign-up sheet only had Gayle, K6GO and myself from 1100 to 1300 Friday which is the busiest time. Kris Jacobs, who is the IDXC co-chair, said there were hams hovering since 0830! We were there early and found Pat, WA6MHZ, was there ready to help. Then John, NA6L arrived and we were good to go. But, before we actually opened MORE club members arrived to help. Not sure exactly when they all arrived, but everyone pitched in and distributed most of the packets without much trouble. Ultimately, we had Dick, K6KAL, Rusty, AF6WF, Pat, WA6MHZ, Tom, N6JOJ, Dan, N6ERD, Ron, N6XT, John, NA6L, Terry, N6CW, Gayle, K6GO and I working to hand out the packets. Kris did a great job of getting the packets stuffed and ready for the opening. Then Tom, Dan and Ron went over and handled all of the prize distributions. Thanks for helping to do SDDXC's part in running the show.

There was a full schedule of seminars, forums and tech talks. We can really be proud of our members for sharing their expertise with the Ham DX community! Of the 22 scheduled daytime presentations our members did 5 of them. Almost a quarter of the programs! Well done!

The presenters from SDDXC were Bob, AK6R on RFI (sorry I missed it, but he was a vendor as well, so I got his photo there), Gayle, K6GO YL Forum, Howard, KY6LA on remote with iPad and Flex, Dennis, N6KI on MARS in Vietnam and Jim, W6YA on chasing deleted counties. Gayle managed to get the YL from Kosovo, Vjollca, Z61VB for here panel. Again, well done!





Other events of note were Bob Heil, K9EID who played the pipe organ at a local theater and the three dinners/breakfasts I attended – Friday contest dinner talk by Tim, K3LR on his contest station in Western PA, Saturday banquet on by Jim, K9JF, Vjollca, Z61VB and Martti ,OH2BH on Kosovo and finally the breakfast was by Robert, N7QT on Mellish reef.

You might notice the large buttons Gayle and Jim are wearing... "I support N6AA" for the poor treatment Dick received. The ARRL Forum was recorded in full this year to prevent a misunderstandings of what he said.

Wish I had more time and room, but I have to get this to Bob, K9RHY our editor to get it put together before the meeting on Wednesday.

See you there.

Mike, NA6MB

Secretary/Treasurer Reports

Randy, KQ6RS

Meeting Minutes, March 28, 2018

At 6:31 P.M. Mike Binder, NA6MB called the meeting to order. 44 members and one guest were in attendance. Our guest was Arnold Punzalan, KM6QVA.

Old business – None



New business - The February minutes and Treasurer report were approved. We discussed planning for the International DX Convention in Visalia, CA. John, K6AM presented the Top 10. The March Bulletin will be delayed due to a computer failure that Bob, K9RHY experienced.

At 6:42 P.M. we started the roundtable discussion.

At 7:10 we took a break.

At 7:30 P.M. Terry Baxter, N6CW gave a presentation on "How to Make DXCC in 50 MHz on only 27 Years."

At 8:16 P.M. John Vissat continued the 6-meter presentation.

At 8:34 P.M. the meeting was adjourned.

Treasurer's Report

Income for March: \$110.00 for membership.

Expenses for March: None

Statement Balance on 4/6/2018: \$6,290.47

Randy, KQ6RS

VP Report

RON, WB1EAZ



As I write this, DXers' thoughts are turning to Visalia. The program and the social activities are certain to entertain. Thanks to all the club volunteers that staffed the registration desk. On another note, I had started spring/summer projects, but with a hard freeze last night here in the mountains, I was reminded that spring has to fight with winter to give us the fine warm weather. Last month was certainly impressive for DX for myself (and I hope most club members) with 17 new band slots. I was finally able to make it to 1500 slots confirmed for the DXCC Challenge.

We have been witnessing an evolution with digital modes, specifically FT8. It appears that the ham community is split pretty evenly split over FT8 with [DX World](#) running a poll on the website, with those voting against FT8 running slightly higher than those voting for at this point. Which brings us to a reminder - that our April program will feature John, NA6L, reviewing the hints and kinks of FT8 operation and the Expedition mode. KH1 will be on the air in two months and has stated that they intend to use FT8 in the DX mode. From my standpoint, use of the DX mode requires some understanding and practice for those that plan to use the DX mode for KH1 or other DXpeditions.

Along the same line, have you checked out the article on page 64—65 of the May edition of QST that discusses how to use JTAlerts sent to your cell phone? The article describes how to set up the JTAlert on your computer to send an email to your cell phone. This appears to have a real use for those of us who are not near enough to the computer to hear an audible alert- whether somewhere else in the house or away from home. I find this interesting and hope someone in the club with more programming savvy can run with this program. It would be great if more information could be provided than DX Alert.

Glad that our Bulletin editor, Bob, K9RHY was able to get back on line after a lightening strike hit his computer. His work is most appreciated by all. (Blushing—Ed.)

March Program

DXing Over the Years: Secrets to Increasing Band Slots

By N6CW and NA6L

Terry, N6CW, provided a great review of his achievement of working 100 countries on 6M. The achievement required very significant time listening and trying to work countries on 6M. Terry detailed that he and a local crew used various means of alerting one another when 6M was open. Terry noted that since the sunspots for the recent past were not high enough to provide 6M contacts, other modes would be required to get to 100 countries on 6M. John, NA6L, then provided an overview of 6M work with digital modes etc. DXing has certainly changed in many ways over the years. Thanks to Terry and John for shining the light on DX opportunities for us all.

April Program

WSJT-X Digital Mode: Hints and Kinks

By NA6L

Explore tips and tricks about the new WSJT-X FT8 Digital Mode including the new FT8 DXpedition mode (currently in Beta testing).

During the just completed second real-time test of the FT8 DXpedition mode, "Q" rates of 225 per hour were achieved by AA7A Ned Stearns (KH1/KH7Z team member) acting as one of the "Fox" Stations (the DX). As the FT8 DXpedition mode software is being tweaked it is expected that "Q" rates of up to 500 per hour will be possible in good conditions. The goal is to use the FT8 DXpedition mode during the KH1/KH7Z DXpedition to Baker and Howland Islands (starting this June 26th).

Row, WB1EAZ

SDDXC RESULTS

By John, K6AM

2017 ARRL SWEEPSTAKES CW CONTEST

CLASS	CALL	SCORE	QSO'S	MLTS	
MS - HP	W6YI (+K6AM N5ZO N6AN N6KI N6MJ ops)	215,136	1,296	83	#1 US/VE
SO - HP	K6NA	162,688	992	82	#3 SW DIV
SO - LP	KI6RRN	145,440	909	80	#1 SW DIV
SO - LP	WN6K	80,700	538	75	#6 SW DIV
SO - LP	N7CW	16,240	140	58	
SO - HP	N5ZO	12,896	124	52	

John, K6AM

THE SDDXC TOP 10

By John, K6AM

TOTAL COUNTRIES WORKED ON 30 METERS

4/18	4/17 CALL	ZNS	C-D	CFM	WKD	CHG
1.	2. K6AM	40	320	326	328	-
2.	3. K6XT	40	297	305	325	-
3.	4. W6YI	39	284	286	315	+3
4.	5. N7CW	40	289	289	311	-
5.	6. K6ZH	39	260	265	282	-
6.	7. N6CW	37	?	215	275	-
7.	8. KOXB	40	260	262	266	+7
8.	9. WN6K	37	204	206	253	-
9.	10. W6YOO	33	236	238	238	-
10.	- WB6BFG	40	214	214	233	NEW

TOTAL COUNTRIES WORKED ON 15 METERS

4/18	4/17 CALL	ZNS	C-D	CFM	WKD	CHG
1.	1. K6AM	40	335	345	346	-
2.	2. N6CW	40	?	331	342	-
3.	3. W6YI	40	331	340	341	-
4.	4. K6XT	40	318	332	341	-
5.	5. KOXB	40	322	329	330	-
6.	6. N7CW	40	319	319	327	-
7.	7. K6ZH	40	309	315	323	-
8.	8. W6YOO	40	314	319	319	-
9.	9. WN6K	40	285	293	315	-
10.	10. NA6L	40	297	297	301	+3

Things have slowed to a crawl on the bands as reflected in this month's report. We're under a yellow flag as all drivers hold their positions on the track while we wait for the propagation to return. 30 meters continues to be productive with some good openings worldwide but 15 is down for the count.

Each month, we will publish top ten lists for one of the lesser recognized but hard won categories. Coming up next, the other WARC bands, 160 and digital modes. Please send me your totals for each band throughout the year and you will be listed in coming months. Use the convenient form at <http://www.sddxc.org> or bring 'em to the meeting.

John, K6AM

From the Editor

Bob, K9RHY



Cato Reef, IOTA OC-265

As an avid IOTA chaser, I was delighted to work VK5MAV/9 on IOTA OC-265, Cato Reef (a new IOTA for me). Cato Reef was a single operator expedition by Andy Mikhaylov, VK5MAV, who now resides in the Morphett Vale section of South Australia. Andy kindly granted me permission to use his description of the operation which follows.

Andy is a prolific IOTA expeditioner, having activated about a dozen rare OC counters in the last dozen years. Here is Andy's story about his adventure on OC-265.

Part 1. We went out into the open sea...

December and January 2018 were spent in preparation for a double expedition to OC-183 Favorite and OC-211 Houtman Abrolhos islands. There were no special problems, it was necessary only to combine all the dates. Both islands are in the state of Western Australia, between them about 150 km by land, and it would be tempting to activate both in one trip. At the end of February just few days left before the date that was set for the purchase of air tickets to Western Australia. And at that moment ...

As usual, at the same time, I was negotiating a couple of other islands for the future, trying to figure out if it was possible to get a permission, how to do it and how to get there.

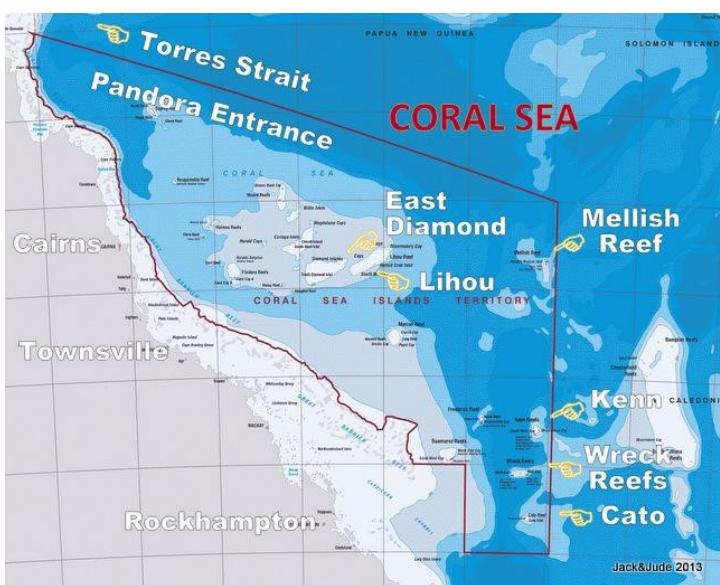
Suddenly, in the middle of February, to my request for the Cato Island OC-265, along with a positive response, I received discouraging information - that at present the draft of changes to access to the Cato area lies on the minister's desk, containing suggestions for toughening access, including a complete ban on camping. It will most likely be adopted on July 1, 2018, and thus make virtually no sense of any attempt to activate the island -

after all, propagation on HF during the day simply does not exist in this phase of the solar cycle.

At that moment I realized that it was necessary to run very quickly. Formal request for permission has been sent out immediately and I frantically began to update information on how to get there. Preparatory work was done a year ago. A website of Big Cat Reality was found here:

<http://www.bigcatreality.com/>, the only boat that conducts 9-day tours to Cato for fishermen several times a year. Even then, I called their office. Consent to my journey with a landing on Cato then did not follow - only uncertain answers, a promise to call back -

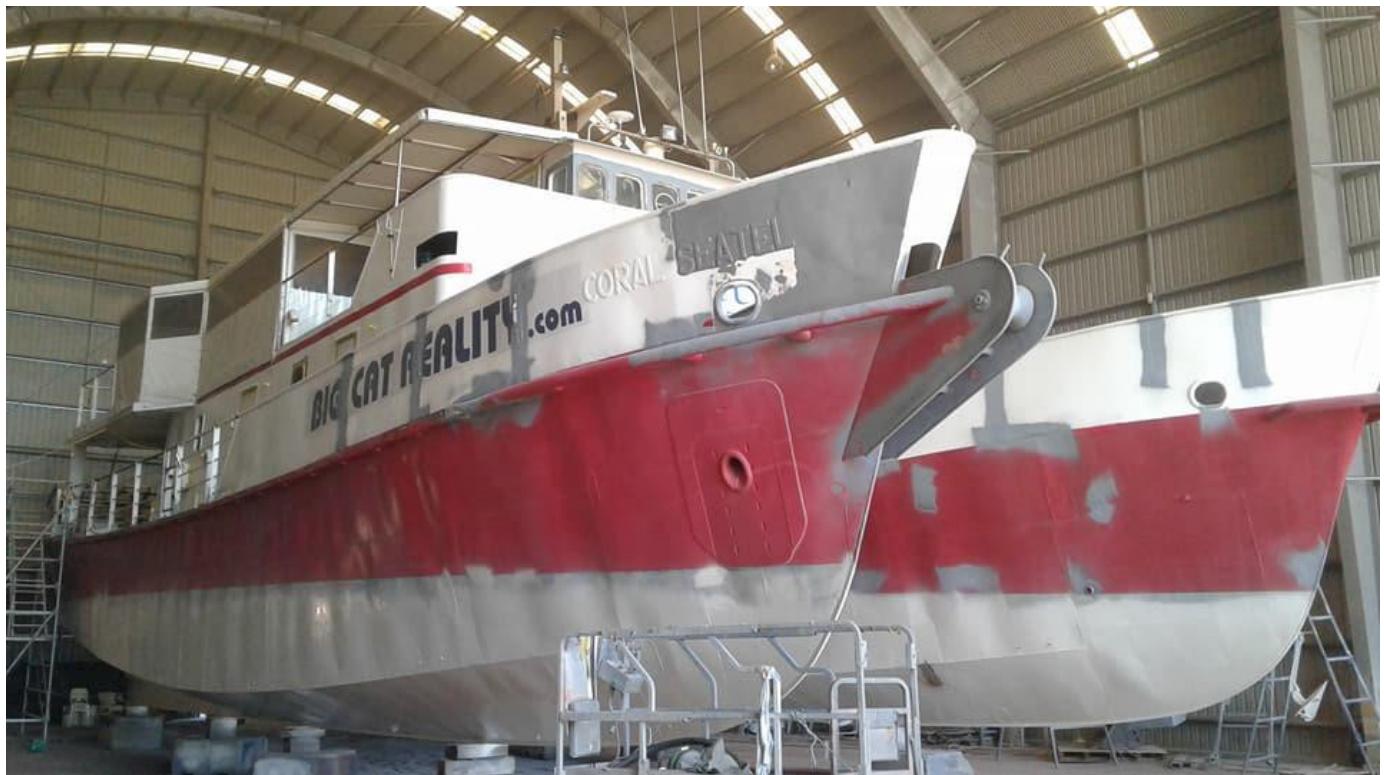
that's all. This is understandable; they have not met such crazy people yet. I did not want to force, because there was not any sense to plan something - it's too expensive for me.



Now I had no way to retreat, as there were no other options. A multiple phone calls began, as a result of that I received an approval for my participation. For sure, copy of the camping permit has been sent through because I've got it already from the Marine Resources Department.

The nearest tour was from 9 to 18 April, the next - in May, and that's it. I had to book tickets urgently, to resolve issues with annual leave at work, to send pieces of baggage (generator, tent, etc.) to Bundaberg, where Big Cat's moored.

At the same time, I actively communicated with the captain of Big Cat, hammering his head with my luggage, asking him to prepare 60 litres of petrol for me and other nonsense. It was uncomfortable to do this, because at that time Big Cat was being completely repaired at the shipyard and James was busy day and night.



At the same time, the situation around the trip was tense with a strong cyclone, which came from the north and was hanging out just in the Cato area. The forecasts were disappointing and very unpleasant. Strengthen to Cyclone Category 4 was possible, several opposite scenarios of development were on the stage at the same time because of very weak uncertain stampings in almost the same place.

For several days the cyclone practically did not move at all, and hanging over Cato Reef.

But slowly everything fell into place - a few days before the start the cyclone was exhausted by torrential rains over the coast; fresh, repaired Big Cat returned to Bundaberg from the shipyard and took the usual place at the pier, ready to receive fishermen and one crazy ham radio operator.

I went on annual leave on Friday, April 6th, to complete all the forgotten preparations, medications and all sorts of trivia. From arrival to loading on the ship, I will have only 4 hours, and to run to unknown places, trying to buy everything, wasn't reasonable idea. Therefore, I had to take everything with me from Adelaide (except water). At 4 am on April 9th, a taxi came after me. After hot farewell to Larysa and half an hour the night city, Qantas picked me up with 4 pieces of luggage weighing about 80 kg at 6 am and carried to the Brisbane direction, where I expected a transfer to the flight to Bundaberg.

The flight and 2 hours of waiting passed quickly enough. The local airline's plane to Bundaberg did not look radiant, but did its job perfectly well.

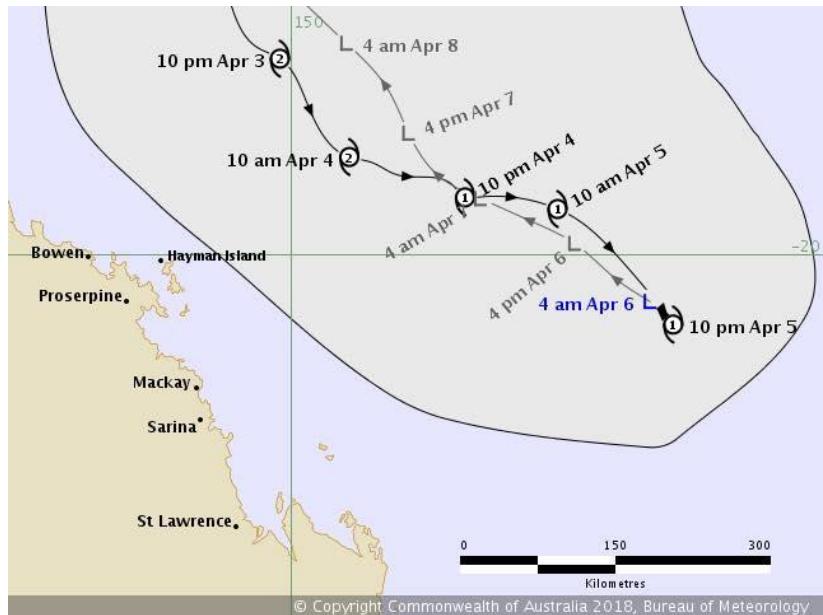
This time I preferred to stay inside and not leave "clean zone" to smoke outside of the airport. Just remembered how it was last year, when I was traveling to OC-267. I was carefully checked in Brisbane after such an exit. Although check-in baggage did not leave the airport, but the hand luggage, in which there

was a transceiver, the key and wires aroused close interest of security officers.

Local airline's planes to Bundaberg did not look radiant - such a working horse. In addition, it was turboprop airplane. I have not seen turboprop airplanes for a long time - probably because I rarely fly to the remote places. There they serve with might and main. However the its job has been done perfectly well. Service, cleanliness and convenience were the same as at the Boeing fled from Adelaide. There was only one thing missing: there were no displays in the armchairs, but they are not needed



for a 40-minute flight, you do not have time to get bored.



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in

The minibus booked in advance was already waiting at the airport, and we set off, simultaneously picking up 2 more people who - surprise, surprise - were fishermen and went on a tour with me.

In just half an hour, after driving through the streets of a one-story city (population 14 thousand), we arrived to Bundaberg Port marina.

The marina met us a little gloomy, reminding that the sea does not like jokes and never forgive mistakes.. The memorial reads:

“FV Cassandra. Tragically lost in the sea on 4th of April 2016.”



Taking them to the pier, where the arriving anglers dropped off their belongings, I decided to have a bite. Huge size Fishburger with fresh fish and hill of chips - what else I needed? And even on fresh air. But it was a mistake - when I sat down on a bench, a gust of wind just snatched a box of things from my hands - and I had to be content only with a fishburger, since it was wrapped separately.

There were still 4 hours left before loading and it was necessary to buy water (the fact that my boxes with the generator and tent have been delivered, and 60 litres of petrol were waiting onboard I checked right away).

Although a few small shops are in the port, buying of bottled water was a problem. To buy 20 litres, I had to run through all the shops and several restaurants. The water was everywhere, but in 0.5 l bottles and without packaging. But zeal is rewarded, and at the last restaurant somewhere from the depths of the freezer I got two boxes.



All the rest had to be collected from the ground and discarded. At that moment I did not think that it was for the best, and that the weather warned me. Well-fed, but slightly displeased I returned to the pier, where a strange action unfolded.

A videographer was walking along the pier, making footage, a tripod with another camera was standing on the pier, and someone was snorkeling in the water under the pier. It turned out that in the turmoil, an anti-glare filter was dropped into the water and it was actively searched by the crew member. The search ended successfully.



As it turns out, we are accompanied by a group of professionals headed by Al McGlashan, who has his own regular TV show on Channel 10 named Fishing with Mates, entirely devoted to fishing in Australia and other countries. I am very glad that they came with us, especially Al - a wonderful, energetic person with enormous charisma as well as whole team.

If you have even a bit of interest in fishing - I advise you to do a search for Al's name – you won't be disappointed. On the photo - he stands.

Well, it was 6 pm and we were all invited to load. My things were stored on the upper deck - to not make a mess with anglers preparing their equipment.

Each of 10 people, including the video crew, brought not one or two fishing rods. As far as I could see, some brought in 5-6 different shapes and sizes. Plus a large number of sinkers, floats, hooks, lures and the rest . I must say that I, with my luggage, looked poor.

But this is understandable - the Coral Sea, and especially Cato Reef area, is famous for its huge variety of fish species and their size. If something has been left at home – no way to get it in the sea. Different ways of fishing planned - trolling, from the beach, from the boats - all possible types and combinations (perhaps, except ice fishing, but I wasn't very sure). By the way, this tour is so-called "sport fishing", when specially prepared hooks only are in use. They allow to release the fish without damage.

By the end of the loading, the cook surprised us by a pleasant smell - large dishes with fresh shrimps and delicious fish pies were served.



When the process of acquaintance, destruction of tasty food and beer was completed, a serious and obligatory part began.

Captain James talked about the area where we go, the restrictions and exact plans, how everything will be organized. He also talked about the weather forecast in the Cato Reef area.

Training on safety and emergency procedures was held - how to use mandatory lifejacket when in the boat , VHF radio, GPS tracker, and also how to react to any abnormal situations on board.

It took about 40 minutes. After that, another briefing began, not for me - how to catch, what to catch, restrictions and requirements. Instead, I went to the ship, getting to know Big Cat from the inside.

It was interesting and unexpected - the ship was beautifully repaired and equipped - but I will touch it in the next part of the story.

Well - everything has been loaded on the boat, Big Cat took full tanks of fuel and water - and unnoticed by the noise of conversations at the stern - we went to Coral sea.

The night began, swell was not strong, the stomach was pleasantly burdened with everything that had been eaten-an hour after dinner was offered a large piece of tender beef with garnish. As usual, the Australian portions are huge and virtually do not leave any space inside to breath.

There were more than 25 hours to Cato Reef ahead and the night was just beginning ...